



**Canadian Police Association  
Association canadienne des policiers**

100 – 141 Catherine Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1C3  
Telephone: (613) 231-4168  
Fax: (613) 231-3254

100 – 141, rue Catherine  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1C3  
Téléphone : (613) 231-4168  
Télécopieur : (613) 231-3254

[cpa-acp.ca](http://cpa-acp.ca)

March 20, 2023

Opening Remarks – Mr. Tom Stamatakis  
President, Canadian Police Association

\*check against delivery\*

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today on behalf of the almost 60,000 members of the Canadian Police Association. For those of you who may not be familiar, the CPA is Canada's largest law enforcement advocacy organization, with members serving in each of your ridings, representing local police associations from coast to coast to coast.

I want to extend to you all my appreciation for your work in undertaking this important study, particularly as I appear here today, less than a week after the horrible tragedy we recently witnessed in Edmonton, with the murder of Constable Brett Ryan, and Constable Travis Jordan, both of the Edmonton Police Service.

I want to begin my remarks by generally agreeing with previous testimony before your Committee by our Minister of Justice, the Honourable David Lametti, where he expressed his confidence in Canada's justice system. Front-line police personnel play a crucial role in protecting the public and maintaining law and order, and our members have a unique and informed view of the many areas where our justice system works, as well as its occasional failings.

From my perspective, it does not benefit anyone to pretend there are not exceptions within our existing system, and unfortunately some of those exceptions result in tragic circumstances, such as was the case in September of last year, where a clearly dangerous individual murdered two people, including Toronto Police Constable Andrew Hong. The assailant had a lengthy criminal history, and clearly continued to pose a serious threat to public safety, despite being repeatedly released. Contrary to the belief of some, this was not an isolated incident; in fact, just three months later, Ontario Provincial Police Constable Greg Pierzchala was shot and killed in Haldimand County by two attackers, also with lengthy criminal histories.

I don't raise this particular case to try to armchair quarterback past decisions, only to highlight the need for all partners in the justice system to come together to address the very specific problem that repeat violent offenders pose, not just for police personnel, but for all Canadians.

We appreciate that bail reform is a complex issue, and we do not claim to have all the answers. We are, however, committed to working with the government, justice system stakeholders, and community organizations to find solutions that are fair, effective, and non-partisan. There are some specific suggestions however that we would like to offer for your consideration:

- Establishing a specific definition of prolific or repeat violent offender, to give Crown prosecutors, Justices of the Peace, and Judges a framework or set of guidelines to work within when

considering bail applications, particularly in situations where reverse onus provisions already exist;

- Stronger emphasis on obligations for sureties, and ensuring that there are consequences for those who act as sureties, particularly when there is established evidence that they are aware of breaches of conditions taking place;
- Increased resources, both within the justice system (to provide for dedicated Crown prosecutors who are specifically trained to argue these particular cases, and to facilitate quicker access to trials for accused who are held without bail), and for police services across Canada to target those offenders who are in breach of their conditions;
- Increased use of technology, particularly electronic monitoring of offenders on bail, to help maintain public safety in our communities;
- Better data collection, to ensure that any policies that are developed are evidence-based and can be evaluated for effectiveness.

I want to be absolutely clear here today: We are not asking for a “tough on crime” solution. As law enforcement officers, we are not asking for an approach that focuses solely on punitive measures. Instead, we ask for a more balanced approach that prioritizes prevention and rehabilitation as well. We believe that bail reform could contribute to this approach, by ensuring that those who pose a significant risk to the public are kept in custody until their trial, while those who do not pose such a risk are granted bail with appropriate conditions.

The fact will always remain that bail is a fundamental right, and the presumption of innocence is a cornerstone of our justice system, however as law enforcement professionals, we are hopeful that this Committee, as well as the government, can work collaboratively to identify potential evidence-based legislative and administrative changes to address the concerns that many of the witnesses that have appeared before your Committee have outlined.

There are very few issues in Canada where there is consensus that includes every elected Premier and provincial ministers of justice and public safety, as well as police personnel, police boards, and police executives, but this is certainly one of them. I look forward to the outcome of this study, and I am certainly happy to take any questions you might have.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today.



Tom Stamatakis  
President  
Canadian Police Association